

**Commission on Aging  
Public Policy Committee  
Minutes of May 11, 2017 Meeting**

**Commissioners Present:** Stephanie Edelstein, Mort Faller, John Honig, Nanine Meiklejohn, Jack Sprague

**Alumni Present:** Chuck Kaufman, Rudy Oswald

**Staff Present:** Dr. Odile Brunetto, HHS

**Guest Present:** GROWS representative

Stephanie reminded those in attendance about the Annual Meeting on May 25. Mr. Leggett will attend. Odile will be forwarding suggested topics to Mr. Leggett's office. The executive committee is expected to discuss this next week.

### **County Budget**

Odile reported the good news that the Council's Reconciliation List includes several budget items to improve services for Montgomery County seniors, including those (\*) requested by the Commission.

- Add one social worker in the public guardianship program\* \$72,026
- Funding for public information on selecting a caregiver \$5,140
- Expand Senior cold meal program from 3 to 5 days per week \$102,396
- Expand the 5-day cold meal program by 4 weeks \$82,890
- Add a P-T staff person for the Senior Nutrition Program\* \$40,889
- Fund 2 Senior Center Plus program sites\* \$150,000
- Increase funding for Adult Foster Care resident transportation\* \$38,000

Noelle will reach out to Councilman Berliner to discuss potential follow up by the Commission. The Council will vote on the budget on May 25, 2017.

### **State Advocacy**

Governor Hogan is in the process of signing 2017 legislation, and has already signed several of the bills supported by the Commission. For a list of bills on which COA commented, see April 2017 minutes.

### **Federal Advocacy**

Stephanie noted Congressman Jamie Raskin's letter responding to the Commission's letter urging him to oppose the American Health Care Act (AHCA). The letter was emailed to COA members earlier this week.

Amy Gotwals, Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), will be a guest at the May Commission meeting. She will discuss relevant federal budget and legislative developments.

The FY17 Continuing Resolution includes a 6.2% reduction in funding for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), and a 9% cut in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

The Administration's FY18 Budget includes cuts to several Older Americans Act, other programs.

## **Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland -- Town Hall**

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland is holding town hall meetings around the state, including one on June 10 in Burtonsville, 10AM – 2PM, Burtonsville Elementary School Gym, 15516 Old Columbia Pike, Burtonsville, MD 20866. There was discussion about a role for the Commission, and a suggestion was made that the forum could be an opportunity to introduce the COA and its work to Caucus members. It could also be a way for the COA to learn more about issues raised by attendees. The Caucus website is <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/07leg/html/caucus/black.html>.

## **Revitalization of COA Communications and Community Outreach Committee**

COA member Hillery Tumba, who has a background in communications, has offered to work on revitalizing the CCO and is setting up meetings with other committee co-chairs to discuss how this might be accomplished. The PPC discussed the goals and past activities of the CCO, and how a revitalized CCO Committee could support the work of the COA in general and the PPC more specifically. In addition to communications and outreach, the CCO has ageism as an area of focus. Suggestions included increasing publicity of Seniors Today, enhancing presence on social media, general publicity of COA activities and successes (eg press releases). It was suggested that the CCO could have a liaison to the PPC and other committees. Stephanie will invite Hillery to the next PPC meeting to discuss further, if her schedule permits.

Odile described the work of the Vital Living Network. There was also discussion about ways to distribute the Stakeholder meeting video, including separating out different workshops.

As part of a more general discussion about outreach and diversity on county commissions and boards, Odile mentioned that the Montgomery County Community Action Board has created a Leadership Development Institute to train new leaders by helping residents with modest incomes learn about the legislative process and advocacy skills. One outcome of this effort could be to increase the diversity of applicants for boards, committees and commissions.

On the issue of ageism, there was some discussion about the lack of older people or people with disabilities in a new promotional video designed to encourage visitors to the County.

The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.